

CCC News Release

California Conservation Corps

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May 31, 2005

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California Conservation Corps, Department of Fish and Game **TWO STATE AGENCIES MARK 25 YEARS OF WATERSHED RESTORATION**

It's a 25-year collaboration that has led to what's likely the largest fisheries restoration effort in the country.

Since 1980, the Department of Fish and Game and the California Conservation Corps have worked together along the rivers and streams of the state's North Coast, with the DFG providing the technical expertise and the CCC providing the labor force. Their goal? To increase spawning habitat for salmon, steelhead and other fish, some of which are endangered or threatened, by restoring and enhancing coastal watersheds.

In June, the two agencies will mark the quarter-century milestone with an impressive list of accomplishments. They include more than 1800 miles of stream and estuary habitat restored or enhanced; more than two million trees planted along the river banks; 6500 fish habitat improvement structures installed and more than 430 fish barriers modified or removed. All of this adds up to more than 1.6 million corpsmember hours over the 25-year period.

The 2005 restoration season will begin June 15 and last through October, with eight to 10 crews expected to work in dozens of coastline locations this year.

The two state agencies have worked cooperatively with numerous private landowners, including all the major timber companies, as well as individuals, Indian

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tribes and state, local and federal agencies. The program has now expanded geographically to include coastal restoration work in Sonoma County and as far south as San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties.

Ryan Broddrick, director of the Department of Fish and Game, praised the longtime collaboration.

"The Department of Fish and Game is proud of its partnership with the California Conservation Corps and grateful for the work of corpsmembers along the North Coast," said Broddrick. "For nearly a generation, corpsmembers have worked on the ground and in the water to improve and restore habitat -- work that will benefit the next generation of Californians and many more to come."

CCC Director Will Semmes said the corpsmembers – more than 3,000 have worked on the projects since 1980 – have benefited from the work as much as the fish.

"The work is tough and wet, with corpsmembers often wading in water up to their waists," Semmes said. "But there's a great sense of satisfaction for them when you can see the results of your work, and salmon spawning in an area you've restored."

Semmes added that corpsmembers gain a solid understanding of watershed management through the hands-on work, with some going on to fisheries-related careers after the CCC.

One of those corpsmembers is Leatha Harris, who worked on North Coast streams in the early 1980s. After the CCC she was hired at a Fish and Game hatchery before going to work at the East Bay Municipal Utility District, where she has been for more than 20 years and is currently a ranger/naturalist.

"It was very tough and we would sometimes hike miles to get to the headwaters

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of the stream," Harris said, recalling her crew's efforts. "But we all valued the work and I think we made a difference."

Gary Flosi, senior biologist supervisor for the Fish and Game who has been with the partnership since its inception, has literally written the book on the effort. "The California Salmonid Stream Restoration Manual," authored by Flosi, has been provided to agencies around the country and requested by several foreign countries.

Flosi said the DFG/CCC effort has been lauded by sport and commercial fishermen, the timber industry and environmental groups for its record of restoration achievements.

The California Conservation Corps is a workforce development program hiring young men and women between 18 and 25. They devote a year of service to California through hard work in environmental conservation work, fire protection and emergency services. For more information, visit the Corps' Web site: www.ccc.ca.gov.

The mission of the Department of Fish and Game is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public. For more information, visit the DFG's Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov.

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